Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Ebola disease factsheet for contacts

Advice for persons assessed as having a higher-risk exposure

Why am I receiving this?

You are receiving this factsheet because you have been identified as having had a **higher-risk exposure to a virus which causes Ebola disease**. It is important that you read this factsheet and follow the instructions contained in it.

What do I need to do?

You will be **monitored for 21 days following your last exposure**. For the remainder of your 21-day monitoring period (until the evening of __ / __ / __):

- monitor yourself for symptoms (see next page) and complete the **twice-daily SMS symptom checks** sent by your public health unit
- check and record your **temperature** using the provided thermometer, twice each day (morning and evening)
- keep this factsheet handy and respond to any calls or messages
- do not travel **interstate or overseas** unless this has been agreed with public health
- follow any additional advice from your public health unit about work, travel, activities or where you should stay during the monitoring period
- you do **not** need to isolate unless you develop symptoms or are specifically advised to do so.

If you are an aid or healthcare worker returning to Australia from an outbreak-affected region, additional restrictions may apply. Your public health unit will advise if this is the case.

What should I do if I develop symptoms?

If you develop symptoms (see next page):

- **immediately contact** public health
  - during business hours, call _____
  - after hours, call the Department of Health on **1800 434 122** and ask to speak to the public health physician on-call
- **immediately self-isolate** and avoid contact with others
- **do not attend a GP, emergency department or other healthcare facility** without speaking to public health
- **do not arrange ambulance transport yourself,** unless urgent emergency care is required.

If you need urgent emergency care, call **000** and tell them that you are being monitored following an Ebola exposure.

If you become unwell with another condition, or need non-urgent healthcare for another reason, contact public health before attending a healthcare facility or arranging transport so that your care can be coordinated appropriately.

What is Ebola disease?

Ebola disease is a rare infection caused by a virus. **Ebola disease can cause serious and life-threatening illness.** Ebola disease can only be diagnosed after symptoms appear.

Symptoms of Ebola infection can be mild at first and may resemble other common illnesses, such as the flu. Possible symptoms of Ebola infection may include:

How is Ebola disease spread?

Ebola disease can spread through **direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of a person who is sick,** including through broken skin, the eyes, nose or mouth. It can also spread through needlestick or other sharps injuries, contaminated items or surfaces, and direct contact with the body of a person who has died from Ebola disease.

Ebola infection is not usually spread through the air like flu or COVID-19. People are generally not infectious before symptoms begin. The risk of spread is greatest where there is direct contact with blood, vomit, diarrhoea or other bodily fluids.

What does ‘higher-risk exposure’ mean?

A higher-risk exposure means you have had a type of contact that is more likely to result in Ebola infection, such as direct contact with blood or bodily fluids without appropriate protection (or where a breach in protection occurred). Your public health unit will explain your exposure classification to you.

A higher-risk exposure **does not** mean you will necessarily become unwell. It means closer monitoring is required so that any symptoms can be assessed promptly and testing and care can be coordinated if needed.

What can I do to protect others?

While you remain **well and have no symptoms, Ebola is not spread to other people.** As an extra precaution during your monitoring period:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet
- wash your hands before preparing or handling food
- do not share personal items that could have blood or bodily fluids on them, such as razors, toothbrushes or towels
- contact your public health unit immediately if you develop any symptoms.

Further information

For further information, visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/articles/a_e/viral-haemorrhagic-fevers-ebola